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## STUDY THE TEACHINGS

As reported in our last issue, Point Loma Publications is conducting a Theosophical Correspondence Course based on the 12 Theosophical Manuals. The course is free, but reimbursement is asked for required postage. The Editors' Preface, printed hereunder, indicates the sweep of theosophical study the course offers.—EDS.

Nature exists and Man exists, and somewhere, unobserved by man's own sophistries there must be available the wisdom and learning which tells us *why* and *how*. As we ponder the question it seems an inevitable conclusion that somewhere there must be preserved a recording, a gathering of facts or 'laws', a formulation in human language of the truth concerning Man and Nature. There must be a basic source from which sciences, philosophies and great religions have sprung.

H. P. Blavatsky, in her writings of immense intellectual and spiritual power—still not fully appreciated—points to that living Source, declaring it exists. She called it the *Gupta-Vidyâ*, and gave to it the Greek name of *Theosophia*, Theosophy, knowledge and wisdom such as the gods or divinities live by. This Ancient Wisdom, she affirmed, has always been in existence, though not always publicly known, having come down the ages tested and checked by generations of Great Seers. It may be called the Facts of Being, the 'laws' or workings of Nature.

In this series of twelve Theosophical Manuals this Ancient Wisdom in its fundamentals is explained with clarity of presentation and logical appeal by students and scholars who have devoted a lifetime to theosophic study. Above all they have been governed by strict honesty and adherence to the teachings as originally reported and recorded.

The first booklet, *Theosophy: A General View of Occult Doctrine*, outlines the over-all teachings, presenting a general picture. Succeeding booklets cover in greater detail the subjects of Reincarnation, Karma, The Seven Principles of Man, Death and After-Death States of Consciousness, Evolution, Man's Divine Parentage: the Origin of Man and of the Earth, The Doctrine of Cycles, The Ladder of Life: Hierarchies, The Astral Light, Psychic Powers, and Theosophy and Christianity.

It is hoped that these Studies will be received with an open mind, for in them the earnest searcher will find keys that are indispensable to an understanding of the Universe and of Man.

## "PAST LIVES", HYPNOTIC REGRESSION, AND THE ASTRAL LIGHT

ELSIE BENJAMIN

Is it wise to try to remember our past lives (granted we have that dubious ability)? Is hypnotic regression reliable or ever advisable? What is the Astral Light? Answers to these questions form the body of the lead article of *Bulletin* (No. 367), of Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists, by its editor, which we here reprint, with only a few reference lines omitted.—EBS.

We recall the answer which Master K.H. gave to Sinnett who had asked him (*Mahâtma Letters*, 145): "Have you the power of looking back to former lives of persons now living and identifying them?" Answer: "Unfortunately, some of us have. I, for one do not like to exercise it."

Those who do wish to remember their own past lives, burdened as they all are with our past mistakes, would do well to remember that none of us lives in a vacuum, so we would remember not only our own but others whose lives crossed ours. Would we like our friends to be aware of all *we* did in past lives? True memory does not reside in the brain which changes from life to life; but the imperishable record is imbodyed in our characters. We must remember too that in the realms of psychic and other such matters, it may be possible to do something, but it may not necessarily be a good thing. It may be and often is tending to black magic.

As for the reliability or otherwise of hypnotic regressings: this was proved unreliable after the famous Bridey Murphy case some years ago in which the hypnotized subject 'remembered' a former life. When a like experiment was conducted in this country the hypnotised subject 'remembered' not only one former life but several. After tests and investigations it was shown that some of these lives were overlapping in time, she was both a man and a woman, lived in one place and lived in another at the same time!

Eliminating any conscious fraud in the experiments, what had happened? Some people dismissed the whole episode as fraud or at best self-deception. H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 179) is discussing "the well-known fact that we often recognize as familiar to us scenes, and landscapes, and conversations, which we see or hear for the first time (in this life) and sometimes countries never visited before." But she insists that this is *not* a proof necessarily of reincarnating or that the person is 'seeing' something from a former life. She gives another explanation, and it has to do with seeing in the Astral Light.

What is the Astral Light? It is Nature's picture-

gallery, the receptacle or repository of everything that has ever lived or occurred: indelibly impressed with the records or 'photographs' of whatever is or has ever been. Throughout it our human minds wander constantly; but it is easily distorted in the minds or through the eyes of the untrained seer, and especially the hypnotised subject whose higher principles have been temporarily paralysed by the hypnotizer.\*

Continuing with H.P.B.:

"... Memory—the despair of the materialist, the enigma of the psychologist, the sphinx of science—is to the student of old philosophies merely a name to express that power which man unconsciously exerts ... to look with inner sight into the astral light, and there behold the images of past sensations and incidents . . . .

"... In the stillness of the night-hours, when our bodily senses are fast locked in the fetters of sleep, and our elementary body rests, the astral form becomes free. It then oozes out of its earthly prison, and as Paracelsus has it 'confabulates with the outward world', and travels round the visible as well as the invisible worlds. 'In sleep', he says, 'the astral body (soul) is in freer motion; then it soars to its parents, and holds converse with the stars'. Dreams, forebodings, prescience, prognostications and presentiments are impressions left by our astral spirit on our brain, which receives them more or less distinctly, according to the proportion of blood with which it is supplied during the hours of sleep. The more the body is exhausted, the freer is the spiritual man, and the more vivid the impressions of our soul's memory. In heavy and robust sleep, dreamless and uninterrupted, upon awakening to outward consciousness, men may sometimes remember nothing. But the impressions of scenes and landscapes which the astral body saw in its peregrinations are still there, though lying latent under the pressure of matter. They may be awakened at any moment, and then, during such flashes of man's inner memory, there is an instantaneous interchange of energies between the visible and invisible universes. Between the 'micro-graphic' of the cerebral ganglia and the photo-scenographic galleries of the astral light, a current is established. And a man who knows that he has never visited in body, nor seen the landscape and person that he recognizes may well assert that still has he seen and known them, for the acquaintance was formed while traveling in 'spirit'."

We think that in the case of hypnotic regression the subject is seeing into the astral light; and his individual will being completely paralyzed by the hypnotist, he identifies himself with what he sees there. "He himself was the person he sees, in a former life." In much the same way as during impressionable periods of one's life one may identify for a time with characters in a novel or a play. This is often observed with imaginative children. But if those studying these subjects know

nothing at all about the Astral Light it is not surprising that they do believe these are cases of genuine remembrance of a former incarnation.

[Mrs. Benjamin then gives the following references from her "Index" under HYPNOTISM: H. P. BLAVATSKY: "distinct from mesmerism," in an article "Black Magic in Science," probably to appear in Vol. XII of her *Collected Writings*; "dangerous", in *Key to Theosophy*, 337-8; "sorcery," in Vol. IX, 253, *Collec. Writ.*; "unconscious if not conscious Black Magic", C.W., XI, 164. W. Q. JUDGE: subject fully analyzed in article on *hypnotism in Echoes of the Orient*, p. 392-6; G. DE PURUCKER: *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, p. 404 *et seq.*, detailed description, summarized: "Under Hypnosis the Higher Part is Expelled from the Lower Quaternary."]

## A NUDGE FROM INSIDE

JALIE N. SHORE

All the theosophical doctrines in the truest sense are practical, that is, they relate to life and living. Here are thoughts on one that is less well known and recognized as are those of reincarnation, karma, the seven principles of man and universe, etc. It is the esoteric teaching of *Swabhâva*, which has the dual meaning of "the essential characteristic of a thing", and also of "self-becoming", a continuous more-and-more becoming of that essential characteristic. This article continues the series begun in *Eclectic* No. 36 with Jan Molijn's "How the Doctrine of Reincarnation Changed My Life." The author, who has taught in private schools, worked for Parent Teacher Groups, and been an editor and writer for educational magazines, speaks from the background of mature theosophical experience.—Eds.

*Swabhâva*. The very sound of the word when first I heard it was exciting. It was in the San Diego Lodge which was studying *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, a book we (my husband and I) had bought in grim Depression years on the installment plan. Under the leadership and tutelage of Hazel and Maurice Braun, Foster Griffith, Dr. Arthur Beale, George Simpson, and other devoted members, the study presented and the discussions that followed illumined our understanding with a burst of inspiration that was like a sudden glow of light on a strange dark highway.

The very sound of the word—*Swabhâva*—was beautiful to hear, a lovely adventure to speak.\* To me it seemed to carry and reveal its own meaning just by its sound. Like the rhythmic words *silâ*, *kshânti*, and *paramitâ*\* we had learned from *The Voice of the Silence*, it brought an illuminating inner enjoyment. I could not pronounce it without feeling an elevation of consciousness and expansion of character. As it is said of the turning of the spheres, it had its own rhythm, tone, and tempo. The introduction of *Swabhâva* with its beautiful vibration, the learning of its meaning through Dr. de Purucker's careful explanations, the recognition of what "essential characteristic" and "self-becoming" involved and how it affected my own life was, I believe, the most thrilling discovery I made in my initial study of Theosophy.

Years before we had ever met *anyone* who admitted

\*See G. de Purucker: *The Esoteric Tradition*, II, 1012 *et seq.*

\*For correct pronunciation see G. A. Barborka's *Glossary of Sanskrit Terms*.

believing in reincarnation and karma we had accepted those twin doctrines without resistance or struggle. Broad reading, thought, and frequently talking over together the ideas involved in the two teachings, gave us a satisfactory explanation of many 'phenomena' we had observed in the lives of others or experienced in our own. They did not seem to run counter to our Christian teachings; rather did they explain them in some cases. But I for one was not excited. They—reincarnation and karma—seemed merely a *modus operandi*, a way, a means of bringing about justice and equilibrium and a kind of everlasting life. (Later study developed a deeper meaning and appreciation of the Law of Periodicity with its wondrous ramifications which, I believe, if pursued to its farthest reaches will involve ALL.)

But Swabhâva proclaimed the individuality of every entity and explained the inner surges that like the 'instinct' within the 'clod' reach and climb into sunlight and a flowering of its own seed. "It (Swabhâva) is pure Individuality working in spirit-matter of which it is the highest part, or summit," explained Dr. de Purucker in *Fundamentals* (p. 111), and "this essential nature (or Swabhâva) becomes in matter a Hierarchy, whether that Hierarchy be an atom, a man, a planet, a sun, a solar system, or a cosmical universe . . . The monad does so following the driving essential urge of his own inner essence, the individuality, its Swabhâva." In other words, all the monads abounding in the Cosmos were not a chaotic mass but were orderly individuals spinning out their own destinies. This individualization explained why I was not confused with my sister, my cousin, or my friend. I had my own essential characteristic with its own urge to learn, to develop, grow and give. It was Self-Becoming; it had been prodding me for aeons; I was a child of myself, had actually been a progenitor of myself. It was a stupendous idea: I had been choosing, evaluating, discarding, and amassing experiences through the ages and had never been anyone else but myself. It explained the differing paths human entities took and why I was not a duplicate of another being.

My appreciation of the world I live in became bountifully richer: planets revolved and evolved in their own individual manner; our earth covered itself with an incalculable number of flora and fauna, each different from the other but inseparable from the same spirit-matter, Swabhavat. The roses in our summer garden remain roses and do not change to snapdragons; asparagus remains asparagus, and lettuce lettuce, and each has a significant value individual to itself. The flock of great Canadian geese that fly honking over my home twice daily in precision formation and military determination has its own Swabhâva, and so do the fluttering starlings I observe dancing their aerial ballets. The cheetah at the zoo has its own essential characteristic, as does the fox.

Each person I know—or do not know—is an Individual with his or her own Swabhâvic nudges. Each in some sector of his life is assembling experiences I may not understand, and each evaluates, chooses, or expands

the necessities to his own growth. I hope I have become more tolerant and understanding of the mores of other people.

The meaning of "inner god" and the Biblical "ye are gods" has become more clear. I feel myself not too far away from the Christian precepts instilled by my independently minded Protestant mother who was more concerned with the eternal verities than with rigid tenets.

The appearance and disappearance of nations in my lifetime have made great drama as has the emergences of heretofore quiescent races now exerting new energies in their efforts at self-expression. The individual Swabhâvic urges of national, racial, philosophical, and religious, and yes, theosophical leaders have contributed to the vitality of the age and left their own imprints. The great religions, past and present, felt their own Swabhâvic impulses. (Certainly the stern Zen differed from the gentle Tao. How many must have touched my own peregrinating monad and planted tiny seeds of truth that burst into bloom later!)

It is exhilarating to be aware of the diversity everywhere and to know it is meaningful. It is wonderful to know that one is a creator, a cooperative partner with Nature. It is a deeply sacred challenge to try to understand my Self-Becoming; to identify with it, to listen for it, to commune with it, to be obedient to it. "Each one of you is an incarnate god," G. de P. often said, and it was electrifying to hear it, "be it!"

The planets are swinging in their orbits. The Sun is pouring forth itself. "Man-plants" are Self-Becoming. There is a song in my heart and it is *mine*. It is *Swabhâva*.

## DR. SALK ON LIFE'S PURPOSE

During recent years ideas suggesting Theosophical themes have become almost a common occurrence in the books of serious writers. This is particularly noticeable in works by Jonas Salk, a biologist famous for his development of the anti-polio vaccine. Whatever the value of this preventive measure against a dreaded infection, the thought of Dr. Salk is worthy of attention. In his first book, *Man Unfolding* (Harper, 1972), he stresses the idea that modern man is outgrowing the mechanistic age of science, and that, for his future development, "A new form of scientific and cultural education will be required as it becomes clearer that man is partly a physiochemical machine and partly a *being* alive in the cosmos." The question of man's purpose is now paramount; in the kingdoms of nature, Dr. Salk shows, "purpose," which seems mainly for survival, is built into the organism as instincts, but *human* purpose, he says, needs to be deliberated and understood before being embraced. Linked with this obligation are the ideas of self-knowledge and responsibility.

In Dr. Salk's later work, *The Survival of the Wisest* (1973), a distinctively Theosophical comparison comes into clear focus. Here he distinguishes between what

he calls the BEING nature of man, which is his true nature, his full life, which he terms EGO. This seems an unmistakable parallel to the Theosophical teaching of higher and lower Manas. The development of this idea in a chapter, "Emergence of BEING from EGO Domination," seems to show that the writer has intuitively grasped the fundamental conception of the occult psychology—the duality of man's nature. He is also convinced that man's higher longings, based on "an intuition of beauty and order," represent an inward sense of meaning or purpose which is in fundamental harmony with the purposes of Nature. But man's life, for the most part, is now occupied with the pursuit of desire and a flight from ills and death. In Dr. Salk's view:

His concerns, thus far, have been more with details than with the overall picture. He has been occupied with disease and death, and with the amenities of life appropriate to each age and epoch. He has not yet seen the importance of understanding life's "purpose", and, therefore, *his purpose* individually and collectively, and of understanding where he fits into the evolutionary scheme of things. When he does, he will then be better able to comprehend his own nature and develop ways and means of dealing with the problems of life *as part* of the process of life itself, not as questions to be avoided or obliterated.

—Reprinted from *Theosophy*, Los Angeles Calif., the section 'On the Lookout', April 1976.

## READER'S NOTEBOOK

### *Time and Eternity*

During last year's Bicentennial, I read with pleasure a collection of early American poems, and marked for further contemplation John Quincy Adams' sonnet "To The Sundial under the Window of The Hall of Representatives of the United States".

The poem begins:

Thou silent herald of Time's silent flight!  
Say, could'st thou speak, what warning voice were thine?

The last lines of the sonnet give the answer:

Yet are thy counsels faithful, just and wise;  
They bid us seize the moments as they pass—  
Snatch the retrieveless sunbeam as it flies,  
Nor lose one sand of life's revolving glass—  
Aspiring still, with energy sublime,  
By virtuous deeds to give eternity to Time.

Quincy Adams was a man of earnest rectitude, and he did, indeed, believe in improving the shining hours! But what did he mean by the phrase "to give eternity to Time"?

Suggestion: Time is fleeting; philosophically speaking it is non-reality; but it is the field of action in

which we must work, struggle, fail, achieve and grow. The ideal eludes us as time slips by.

On the other hand, we are rooted in Eternity, the divine essence of our being; and Time's experience increases in value and takes on a deeper meaning when we hold in our consciousness an awareness of our eternal center of being. Action and awareness are the dual ways of life by which we evolve. "Aspiring still with energy sublime, By virtuous deeds to give eternity to Time."

Is not that the core of Katherine Tingley's memorable phrase: "the sacredness of the moment and the day?"

—S. A. TARRYTON

## THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW

CLARA M. CODD

The October 1976 issue of *The Theosophist* (Adyar) is devoted to tributes to Clara Codd, marking the centenary of her birth. It has two full-page pictures of her, one taken in the 1920's when she first began her lecturing activities, and the other in her later years. Clara Codd was a tireless worker for seven decades, and, judging from the warming anecdotal reminiscences of these pages, one of the most loved and widely appreciated members of the T.S. (Adyar). Her last public talk was at the World Congress of the Society in Salzburg, Austria, in 1966. It was followed by "a standing ovation," writes Joy Mills in her article of tribute, "the spontaneous tribute to the gallant soldier who never swerved from the vow she had taken on entering the Society to use every talent and capacity in the service of humanity."

Extracts from Clara Codd's several books and a reprint of "A Talk at Summer School, U.S.A., July 1974", close this special number. Space permits quoting here only a few extracts from this talk (titled "The Weightier Matters of the Law"), characteristic of her directness and simplicity of approach in meeting any question.—Eds.

We sometimes call the general public, those who are outside the Society, the 'outsiders', but I do not like that term. I do not think there are any outsiders. If we do not call them outsiders, we sometimes call them young souls, which is a worse term still. There are just as many young souls in The Theosophical Society as there are outside it . . . .

It is very easy in our Society to get superstitions. One of our superstitions is that we must always have music before a lecture. Now it is lovely to have beautiful music, if it is short and played by someone whose soul is in it. I do not think it ought ever to take more than three minutes. Sometimes our lodges will invite public singers to come, who are not members. I would not advise you to do that, because public singers are sometimes very sensitive people, and we have to let them sing at least two songs and often an encore. That detracts from the purpose of the meeting which was to hear the speaker on Theosophy. Occasionally there is a piano in the lodge that really should be discarded. I think it is better to have no music than an out-of-tune piano played by someone who cannot play correctly.

Then I would like to say a word about meditation and invocations. I think we should never have meditation before a public meeting. The public just does not

understand. Nor should we have invocations all said together, not even at Lodge meetings, for too often it sounds like school children singing that two plus two makes four. If we recite an invocation because it means something to us and say it beautifully, that is fine. The things that make an atmosphere in a lodge are the sincerity, the real depth of feeling and the devotion of the members, not just because there is music or because all say something together . . . I think that our lodges exist for teaching Theosophy . . . .

The last thing I should like to talk about is the subject of the so-called 'occult arts'. This is what Madame Blavatsky says about this: "Occultism is not magic, though magic is one of its tools. Occultism is not the acquirement of powers whether psychic or intellectual, though both are its servants. Neither is occultism the pursuit of happiness as man understands the word. For the first step is sacrifice and the second, renunciation." And then she tells us what occultism is. "Occultism is the science of life and the art of living."

I would ask all of you to see what you can do with life, minute by minute. The man who becomes the most useful pupil of the Master is he who lives ordinary life very beautifully. And, you know, if we do that, we shall be of tremendous, potent, unseen influence in the town and in the lodge.

I want to read you a letter that the Master Kuthumi once wrote to Mr. Judge. Mr. Judge was all alone in America for a long time. I always think we owe him a great deal, because he was the one who held the banner aloft almost all by himself for many years in this country. I think he used to get disheartened and he used to write to Colonel Olcott and ask why Madame Blavatsky did not write to him. But one day she wrote him a letter, and on the back of it there was the blue script of the Master Kuthumi. This is what the Master wrote: "The whole busy continent of America is eaten up by materialism and when an effort is made towards psychic life, it results only in dragging that psychic life down into matter where it dies as a volatile gas escapes in the hands of one who is not expert. You know that any school founded amongst you would at once become a school of practical magic working in order to produce results in matter. The reason is that even those who are most in earnest among you have no true psychic aspirations. Remedy this in yourself and endeavor to remedy it in others by word and example."

Then the Master proceeds to tell Mr. Judge how we may do that. "Desire no results which are the forms of power. Desire only in your efforts to reach nearer to the center of life which is the same in the universe and in yourself, which make you careless whether you are strong or weak, learned or unlearned. It is your divinity, it is the divinity we all share. But its existence is not credited by those who look only for money or power or success in material effort. Lean, I pray you, in thought and feeling away from these external problems which you have written down in your letter. Draw on the breath of the Great Life throbbing in us all, and let faith (which is unlearned knowledge) carry

you through your life as a bird flies in the air—undoubtedly. Only remember one thing—when once you fling yourself on the great life of Nature, the force that keeps the world in motion and our pulses beating and which has within it, in its heart, a supreme and awful power—once having done that, you can never again claim back your life. You must let yourself swing with the motion of the spheres. And you must live for other men and with them, not for or with yourself. You will do this, I am sure."

Now that is true spirituality. That is the thing that matters. That is the "weightier matter of the law." All the other things are useful and interesting, but they do not matter so much as that. This is the one thing that matters to all of us in our influence upon the world and in our ability to help other people . . . .

## Notes From An Indian Diary

Feb. 24, 1976. It is only a few miles from the busy city of Madras to the quiet beauty of Adyar, the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, which is located in a several hundred acre park-like estate handsomely landscaped on the Adyar River. The headquarter's building and President's home, once the palace of a Maharaja, is imposing. The famous banyan tree adjoins it and provides shade for 2,000 people. The publication building stands nearby, ornamented by a magnificent bougainvillea which reaches two stories to the roof. The grounds include a visitor's guest house, a shrine, a Buddhist temple, a chapel, and the Garden of Remembrance with memorials to H. P. Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, and Annie Besant.

Mrs. Seetha Neelakantan, the Director, met us in her office at the Library and Research Center. It is a beautiful modern building with air conditioning and with accommodation space and desks for visiting scholars. The library holds 150,000 valuable books and 17,000 manuscripts. Included are books by H. P. Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, Annie Besant and other leaders and Theosophical Society scholars. There is a large collection of Sanscrit books and documents, many collected by Olcott during his travels in Asia before the turn of the century; some of the Sanscrit manuscripts are delicately inscribed on rare palm leaves. Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, encompassing a period of thirty years commencing in 1878, is here near H. P. B.'s original and voluminous scrap book. There are also first editions, valued by research scholars who come to the library from all over the world.

The same building houses the archives and museum, with the Society's historical treasures. Mrs. Alwyn Michel, the archivist, enlightened us about the early days of the work. H. P. B.'s bookcases and chair and Col. Olcott's desk remind us of the life and times of 1902. Many photographs, some enlarged to poster size for exhibits, visualize important events and people of the Society's past. Of particular interest to the writer was

correspondence between Olcott and Thomas A. Edison.

An interview with Mr. C. K. M. Swamy, the Society's Treasurer, ended my visit to Adyar. Both Mr. Coats and Miss Mills were away on lecture tours at the time.

The Theosophical Society, I learned, enjoys a highly respected place in India's history. In the story of India's independence movement the name of Annie Besant is linked with Mahâtma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In honor of the centennial celebration of the founding of the Society last year, the government of India issued a commemorative postage-stamp engraved with the symbol of the Society and the motto "There is no religion higher than Truth".

A message from Mr. John B. S. Coats, President of the Society, was in my mail when I arrived home. It read, "We are always glad when members of Point Loma visit us, because the more we come to know each other, the better for the future harmony of the work". Isn't Mr. Coats' thought true of the relationships between people in all countries; the more we know of each other's customs, hopes and fears, the less difference we discover in all humanity?

What single thought predominates among the myriad impressions, experiences, and ideas encountered during our Indian trip? I agree with Julia Flory's favored quotation from the *Dhammapada*:

Long is the night to him who is awake,  
Long is the mile to him who is tired,  
Long is the life of the foolish who do not know  
the true law,  
To one in whom love dwells, all in the world are  
brothers.

—WALTER EVANS, San Diego, California

## Flash-Back To A Significant Historical Event

On September 15, 1901, thirty-five children from Santiago de Cuba arrived at Point Loma, California, to receive free care and education afforded by the International Brotherhood League, the humanitarian department of The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society presided over by Katherine Tingley. The children had been collected by Sr. don Emilio Bacardí, distinguished Cuban patriot and historian and then Mayor of the city.

Among the older children of the Cuban group entering the Râja-Yoga School were two who figure in this very recent flash-back: Octavia Franco and José Alberni, both then aged 11. José returned to Cuba in 1903; Octavia remained in Lomaland until 1909. In a letter written from Miami, Florida on July 30, 1976, Octavia says in part:

"Although I'm going to be 89 in January, I'm never bored, because I have a great deal to accomplish. I am really feeling very well. I am ready and alert. I keep house, cook and help my daughter, Carmelina, because she works out.

"Answering your question, Carmelina married the son of José Alberni, William. José became a good lawyer, was elected a Representative in the Cuban Congress, then a Senator and Minister of Justice. He kept a picture of Mrs. Tingley in his office. Sometimes we would talk about Point Loma, and he would say, 'Whenever I have a problem I look at her beautiful penetrating eyes and ask her for help, and she has never failed me.' So you see, as you sow, so shall you reap. Her wonderful teachings cannot be forgotten, because it is a chain that is passed on, and is a very fruitful inheritance, worth much more than money.

"In the world we are living in today, of crime, drugs, theft, etc., at least we can look back with satisfaction and pride, because we loved, appreciated, and admired a very wonderful, unselfish woman, who gave us what we have today. God bless her!

"You have no idea how often I turn my mind and *re-live* those beautiful years of my childhood. What a different world it is today. I am reading a great deal about meditation and I realize that Mrs. Tingley's principles were based on meditation. I have helped to bring up my grandchildren based on the teachings that I received; and the result is marvelous. I have four grandchildren self-supporting: good parents and very good husbands and wives. So I consider myself a very lucky person. I have 6 great grandchildren, 5 boys and a cute and sweet little girl."

Enrique Columbié was another of the 90-odd Cubans educated at Point Loma. At 10 years of age he entered the Râja-Yoga School there and remained for 9 years. He was loved by all and was treated by Katherine Tingley with as much affection as if he had been her own son. In a letter from Enrique dated Miami, Florida, November 12, 1975, he said in part:

"Last Sunday I was at the *Municipio de Santiago de Cuba En El Exilio*, and had a nice chat with my old friend Luis Casero, President. Many years ago he was Mayor of the City of Santiago de Cuba (a fine mayor) and before Fidel Castro took over he was Secretary of Public Works.

"In the course of our conversation we referred to Point Loma and K.T.—her wonderful work in Cuba; how at the end of the Spanish-American War she arrived at Santiago de Cuba with a steamer loaded with medicine, food, clothes, etc. (I understand that President McKinley provided her with said steamer.) We also spoke of the Râja-Yoga Schools at Santiago de Cuba, at San Juan Hill, at Santa Clara (now Las Villas), where the great Martha Abreu gave the land for her to establish an R.Y. School, and at Pinar del Río, etc.

"Mr. Casero would like to have a photograph of the Roman Gate at San Juan Hill and also one of Katherine Tingley. He is desirous of having all this for publication in the Club's magazine, *El Cubano Libre En El Exilio*.



"I think this is an excellent idea! As in your Point Loma Archives you have the Cuban Album, which contains all this information, I wonder if it would be possible for you to prepare a memorandum, whenever you have time, with all these facts, which I would, of course, translate into Spanish."

The information referred to is indeed available—enough to fill a large volume, with the names of all the Cuban children who came to Point Loma to be educated in the Râja-Yoga School, with no discreditable record on any of them, and the noteworthy achievements of some; a chronicle of the dedicated teachers and helpers who rendered volunteer service at the schools in Cuba referred to by Enrique; appreciative private and public recognition given the schools' accomplishments and program; the full account of the Eleven Cuban Children escorted by Dr. Gertrude W. Van Pelt detained at Ellis Island but eventually admitted by order of the Commissioner General of Immigration: All this and much more awaits the time and undivided attention of a painstaking chronicler of historic matters of noteworthy, constructive work of lasting value under Theosophical auspices.

—IVERSON L. HARRIS

## BOOK REVIEWS

THEOSOPHY, THE WISDOM RELIGION, *The Blavatsky Trust*, P.O. Box 167, London, N 20 OHQ, by G. A. Farthing.

This booklet of nine short chapters is simply written with the earnest intention of making the basic principles of Theosophy clear to the inquirer. The brief Foreword presents an explanation of the 'Blavatsky Trust and the Wisdom Religion' with reference to the object of the 'Trust' and to "men of superior development and power who represent the advance guard of humanity." The very short bibliography includes H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* and *Collected Writings* (edited by Boris de Zirkoff). H. P. B.'s *Key to Theosophy*, and Howard Murphet's *When Daylight Comes* are suggested reading.

A comparative table of cardinal points in Christian Church doctrine and equivalent teachings in Esoteric Philosophy is presented in Chapter 8. Thus, in the table opposite such categories as 'God', 'Sin', 'Salvation', 'Son and Savior', 'Heaven', 'Hell', 'Death Everlasting', etc., will be found a parallel Theosophical Teaching with a succinct development of each. To the many steeped in Church tenets these parallels should prove helpful.

Readers of this booklet miss the identification of the sources of direct quotations appearing throughout. They are all good, all apropos, but serious readers expect identification of quotations either spoken or written, especially when these are used to make salient points. Otherwise, the author's efforts are to be commended.

—JALIE N. SHORE

GOLDEN THREADS IN THE TAPESTRY OF HISTORY by Kenneth Morris, Point Loma Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 9966, San Diego, Calif. 92109, 246 pp. Index, \$4.75.

History can be taught in a number of ways, the most usual being a chronicle of battles and kings and physical developments in the student's own country. Kenneth Morris's approach is entirely different. His purpose is to trace the spiritual unfoldment of world history from earliest humanity to the present times. He uses the metaphor Golden Threads in the Tapestry of History to apply to the deeds of the men and women who have had a decisive and uplifting influence in their own times. He gives a masterly and erudite description of all the different cultures known today. He begins with a general review of comparative religions, and follows his theme first to the Greek, Roman, and European countries. He makes an interesting point: that often enough the men and women endowed with the special qualities needed for the good of their nations at specific moments were not in themselves spiritual or even particularly virtuous. More than spirituality is often needed in times of national stress, and these people had the necessary gifts and influence to help the forward development of their countries.

Then follows a long description of the Great Ages of China and Japan between 2205 B.C. and 1268 A.D., a period very little known in Morris's time and even now only by specialists in Sino-Japanese history. This section is rather disproportionately long, but full of such interest that one would not want it shorter. Then he comes to Saracenic times, and his description shows Islam and Mohammed in quite a different light from our usual outlook. As descendants of the Crusaders, we are brought up to see the infidels as the great enemies of Christendom, and it is most illuminating to read of the Theosophical tenets of Islam. For it is the Golden Thread of Theosophy and higher humanity which Kenneth Morris follows through all these countries and eras. He is a poet, and this fascinating book is written in an elaborate and beautiful style not often to be found in this prosaic age.

—BARBARA WELBY

## ITEMS of INTEREST

### BLAVATSKY COLLECTED WRITINGS—AN APPEAL

We are informed by Theosophical Publishing House (Wheaton) that Volume 12 of Collected Writings of H.P.B. (compiled by Boris de Zirkoff) is ready for publication, BUT (beware that adversative conjunction!) we are also told that "there is no cash in the H.P.B. account" needed for printing, binding, etc. This, then, is an appeal to those interested to send whatever contributions they can to support this very worthwhile work, sending them direct to Theosophical Publishing House (H.P.B. Fund Account), Box 270, Wheaton, Ill. 60187. Our friends at TPH might consider payment for an advance order also very helpful.

### BI-CENTENNIAL CO-OPERATION

In our November 1976 issue we noted the joint publication by The Theosophical Publishing House (Wheaton, Illinois) and Point Loma Publication, Inc.

of Dr. G. de Purucker's *Golden Precepts: A Guide to Enlightened Living*; and the inclusion by TPH, Wheaton, in their special Quest Book Christmas advertising of G. de P.'s *Clothed With the Sun: The Mystery-Tale of Jesus the Avatâra*.

TPH now in its Spring announcements advertises 10 of the 12 Theosophical Manuals published by P. L. Publications. (The two manuals: *Reincarnation*, and *Psychic Powers* are published jointly with P. L. Publications by TPH (London) and TPH (Wheaton). (Point Loma Publications offers the complete set of 12 for \$20.00; 40% to Theosophical Lodges and Study-Groups, as well as to Libraries and dealers).

These instances of co-operation in theosophical publishing are promising auguries of the bi-centennial theosophical era newly begun.

#### ANONYMITY

An anonymous letter has been received, postmarked from Santa Barbara, California, a personal comment on "A Chapter of Theosophical History Clarified" (*Eclectic* No. 37). We refer to it reluctantly, because to quote it or respond to it in full would be of little historical interest to our general readers, serve no constructive purpose, but only tend to reinforce rigid attitudes more divisive than concordant. For some historical information, however, that may be of interest to the anonymous writer, he or she is referred to: *The O. E. Library Critic* (Ed. Dr. H. N. Stokes), the Sept., Oct., Nov., and December 1932 issues, which have articles on the Judge "Diary", and also one "In Defense of Robert Crosbie", followed by R. C.'s article "The Sifting Process." Also: *The Theosophical Forum*, March and August issues, 1934, with "Leaves of Theosophical History" (extract from address by Robert Crosbie); letters from R. C. to Katherine Tingley; and extract from article by R. C. in the *Search Light*, Vol. I, No. I.

#### SANSKRIT KEYS TO THE WISDOM-RELIGION

*Irmgard Scheithauer, Berlin*: That Sanskrit book by Judith Tyberg is grand. An excellent idea to publish it, and we are very grateful to have it.

#### THE SECRET DOCTRINE

*J. J. Laughlin, Walla Walla, Washington*.—When it comes to seeking for the Truth, I find there is no limit to what a person can obtain from *The Secret Doctrine*, if you will just devote the time to it. I have now studied it through 7 times, and have found plenty in it to keep the thoughts conveyed into fresh material every round through it. I am now convinced that H.P.B. recorded plenty for this Century!

#### GOLDEN PRECEPTS

*T.E.P., Madrid, Spain*.—A friend in Kentucky sent me a wonderful gift, *Golden Precepts* by G. de Purucker. Having read and reread this little book, I thank you very much indeed for publishing books of this caliber of spiritual wisdom that goes on reverberating long after it has been read.

*V.U. and I.U.S., Chicago, Ill.*—We have found that de Purucker's *Golden Precepts* is our favorite 'give

away'. The inspiration and beauty in its profound simplicity reaches every heart. Thanks to Point Loma Publications for making this priceless book so available.

*N.M., Chicago, Ill.*—Thank you for *Golden Precepts*. It came at a time when I needed its beauty and truth and inspiration. [H.N. had just had the last cast removed after a serious car accident.] I have started my day with it ever since. Many passages are marked as I have recognized their truth in my own experience. I read only a few pages at a time. I find some precious nuggets and close my eyes and turn my mind inwards to savor the beauty I have found. My thoughts lead off from there in many directions and I feel in every fiber of my being a lightness and an illumination as if a light had been turned on within me. Soon I am brimming with energy and planning the day's activities.

#### LETTERS ROUND THE WORLD

We note that the December 1976 Corresponding Fellows Lodge *Bulletin* (Worthing, England), has in its "Discussion & Comment" representation from 8 different countries: Israel, South Africa, Holland, U.S.A., England, Malta, Finland, Canada. Bravo!

#### ILA BARBORKA

"Ila has passed into Light." The phone call was from our old friend Geoffrey A. Barborka, of Ojai, California notifying us of the passing of his wife Ila Barborka around midnight of February 11th after a few weeks' illness. Ila had been a Theosophist all her life, the child of theosophical parents, Dr. & Mrs. Arthur A. Beale, of Harrogate, England. She came to Point Loma, California, in the early 1920's and was the traveling companion of Mrs. A. G. Spalding until the latter's death, and then housekeeper for Katherine Tingley, and later for Dr. G. de Purucker. In 1938 she married Geoffrey Barborka. In 1943 they moved to Chicago. Members of the Point Loma T.S. since their early years, they now joined the T.S., Adyar. On "retirement", continuing the theosophical work which has ever been the mainstay of their lives, they settled in Ojai, Calif., where Geoffrey has been particularly busy, in addition to his literary work, as an instructor in the Krotona School of Theosophy.

In addition to her husband, Ila is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Mora Forbes of Emsworth and Mrs. Katherine Pearl Kramer of Westbourne, England, who also had devoted many years in theosophical work at the Point Loma Headquarters.

In a last letter received from Ila dated January 20th, she wrote: "Please remember me to all my friends. My love to all." That love and that remembrance, indeed, from friends in many parts of the world, returns a hundredfold to one who always gave generously of her energies, who loved Theosophy dearly, and who supported its leaders loyally.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

The following contributions received since our last report in *Eclectic* No. 38 are here acknowledged with deep appreciation: Anon., \$15.00 I.S., \$50.00; V.U., \$50.00; Anon., \$75.00; I.S. and R.B., \$124.36; D.H., \$12.50; J.C., \$50.00; R.C., \$50.50; E.M.G., \$1.50; T.A., \$20.00; R.H., \$15.00; D.B.v.d.S., \$20.00; V.U., \$125.00; Anon., \$5.00.